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UNCLAS DUSHANBE 001696

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: A SHOT ACROSS THE NGO BOW? POST SEEKS GUIDANCE IN RESPONSE TO MFA REQUEST

The Embassy received the following diplomatic note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asking for extensive information on non-governmental organizations connected to the U.S government operating in Tajikistan. This dip note could further dampen NGO activity in Tajikistan and further threaten the U.S. democracy agenda.

Post seeks soonest guidance from the Department how to respond.

Begin Text:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America in Dushanbe and in response to note # 832/05 of October 11, 2005 has the honor to inform the following. As is known, on September 13, 1993, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of the United States of America signed an Agreement Regarding Cooperation to Facilitate the Provision of Assistance. On the basis of this Agreement, for ten years, the United States of America has been providing all possible assistance to the Republic of Tajikistan. Also, within the framework of this Agreement, a number of American governmental and nongovernmental organizations implementing the U.S. Government aid programs have been operating in the Republic of Tajikistan. In the above mentioned note, the Embassy sent a list of organizations that according to that Agreement, shall be exempt from any taxes, duties or other similar payments imposed by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and local authorities. In this connection, the Ministry requests that the Embassy gives instructions to the organizations indicated in the note to submit the required information about their legal status and full account of their activity in the Republic of Tajikistan to the Ministry. The accounts should include the following:

1. Copies of constituent documents;
2. The structure (including that of the head and field offices), personnel structure and the number of their staff;
3. The biodata of the personnel of these organizations, including foreign and local;
4. Exact legal addresses of these organizations in the Republic of Tajikistan, including copies of lease agreements of their office premises;
5. A detailed description of their projects indicating the budget and estimate of costs;
6. Information about their partners (NGOs, private citizens, higher educational institutions, educational establishments, local communities, etc.) in the Republic of Tajikistan.
7. Major trends of their activity and indication of the final result;
8. The amount of the given credit and information about the interest profit (for the organizations engaged in micro-financing).

The Ministry informs the Embassy that the decision on the exemption from taxes, duties and other similar payments shall be adopted after receiving the abovementioned documents and their detailed study. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan avails itself of this opportunity to express to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

End text

COMMENT: We are worried that this is the slippery slope that would allow Tajikistan to weed out the NGOs it does not like.
END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND

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